



APPLICANT GUIDE FOR THE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

PART 1 – GENERAL INFORMATION	2
PART 2 – PROGRAM INFORMATION	2
PROGRAM OBJECTIVES	2
PROGRAM STREAMS	2
ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS	3
ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES.....	3
ELIGIBLE COSTS	5
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	6
PART 3 – APPLICATION PROCESS	7
PART 4 – COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FORM	7
SECTION A – APPLICANT INFORMATION	7
SECTION B – AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE.....	8
SECTION C – OWNERSHIP.....	9
SECTION D – REQUIRED INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTS	10
SECTION E – PROJECT INFORMATION	12
SECTION F – DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION.....	14
SECTION G – DISCLOSURES	14
SECTION H – CONSENT AND CERTIFICATION.....	15
PART 5 – CONTACT ACOA’S REGIONAL OFFICES	16



APPLICANT GUIDE FOR THE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

PART 1 – GENERAL INFORMATION

This guide is designed to assist applicants in applying for financial assistance through the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency's (ACOA) Business Development Program (BDP).

It is the applicant's responsibility to complete all necessary sections of the Application for Financial Assistance Form (Application Form) accurately and thoroughly, ensuring that all required information as specified in this guide is included. Incomplete or inaccurate applications may result in ACOA being unable to consider the application or may lead to delays in the application's evaluation.

Should you have any questions, you are encouraged to reach out to the nearest [ACOA office](#) for assistance.

PART 2 – PROGRAM INFORMATION

This section provides details on the BDP. For additional information on the BDP that may not be found in this guide, please visit ACOA's [Programs and Initiatives page](#).

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Through the BDP, ACOA fosters economic growth in Atlantic Canada by enhancing the competitiveness, innovation and productivity of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Additionally, ACOA collaborates with communities to cultivate and diversify local economies and advocates for the region's strengths in partnership with the people of Atlantic Canada.

The BDP aims to:

- improve the growth and competitiveness of Atlantic SMEs; and
- provide for dynamic and sustainable communities in Atlantic Canada.

PROGRAM STREAMS

The BDP offers two funding streams:

Commercial (For-profit Projects)

- This stream is designed for commercial entities engaged in projects that focus on the establishment, expansion and modernization of businesses. It also provides funding for development projects aimed at enhancing business skills, improving productivity and acquiring vital information.



APPLICANT GUIDE FOR THE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Non-commercial (Non-profit Projects)

- Tailored for non-profit organizations, this stream provides assistance to entities that offer support services to the business community.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

The following entities are eligible under the BDP:

Commercial Applicants

- Eligible commercial applicants include individuals, sole proprietorships, partnerships, co-operatives, a body corporate or a Crown corporation that carries on, or is about to carry on, for-profit activities in Atlantic Canada, and an Indigenous, band-owned and Indigenous community-owned business.
- Exclusions in this category are governments and municipalities.

Non-commercial/Non-profit Applicants

- Eligible non-commercial/non-profit applicants include non-profit incorporated entities, and may include a Crown corporation, a provincial government, a municipal government, a non-profit organization owned or controlled by a provincial or municipal government, local economic development associations, post-secondary educational institutions, co-operatives or a band as defined in the *Indian Act* (as may be amended or replaced) or an Indigenous-controlled non-profit entity.

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The BDP offers support for projects that align with any of the following activities:

Commercial Activities

Commercial activities focused on establishment, expansion and modernization:

- Activities that are reasonably required to establish a viable operation. This normally consists of construction, buildings, and purchase and installation of equipment, etc.
- Activities that are reasonably required to successfully expand the production capacity of an operation. This normally consists of a physical expansion of the production capability, by means of increased space or equipment.



APPLICANT GUIDE FOR THE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

- Activities intended to achieve the more efficient and competitive production of goods currently being produced. This normally consists mainly of capital expenditures.

Commercial activities focused on development:

- Activities related to performing or engaging the services of a qualified consultant to perform a study for a business plan, feasibility analysis, productivity improvement plan, marketing plan, market research, technology evaluation, or investigation of licencing opportunities.
- Activities that would allow the operation to enhance its competitive ability to bid on and/or acquire private-sector, international or public-sector procurement contracts or sub-contracts.
- Activities focused on incremental marketing, human resource development, productivity improvement or quality improvement.

Non-commercial/Non-profit Activities

Non-commercial/non-profit activities aimed at supporting businesses:

- Specialized services such as training, skills development, planning, business information, business counselling and advice, testing services, research and development services, technical or innovation services, business networking, and market development, including international market development for the purpose of increasing export sales and attracting foreign direct investment.
- Establishing, expanding or modernizing a facility to provide specialized services in support of entrepreneurship, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), or local economic development.
- Providing the necessary site-specific infrastructure to support SMEs, with the exception of basic municipal infrastructure.
- Engaging the services of a qualified consultant to perform a study for a business plan, marketing plan, or feasibility study in connection with a project likely to be eligible for a contribution under this program.
- Carrying out a development study that is likely to have a significant impact for the development of SMEs in the region.



APPLICANT GUIDE FOR THE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

ELIGIBLE COSTS

Eligible costs include incremental costs essential for the implementation of projects as listed below:

Commercial

- Machinery and equipment
- Product development costs
- Site improvements
- Infrastructure
- Intangible assets
- Self-built assets
- Start-up costs
- Working capital
- Materials required for the project
- Marketing
- Training
- Productivity and quality improvement, and environmental management systems
- Consultants

Non-commercial/Non-profit

In addition to eligible costs set out for commercial projects, for projects providing a service to business in areas such as entrepreneurship development, marketing, export development, training or technology transfer, additional eligible costs are as follows:

- Specialized services such as planning, business information, business counselling and advice, testing services, research and development services, technical or innovation services, sector export development strategies and business networking.
- Market and trade development.



APPLICANT GUIDE FOR THE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

- Capital costs associated with establishing, expanding or modernizing a facility for providing specialized services in support of business.
- Provision of site-specific infrastructure to support SMEs, but not including basic municipal infrastructure.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Projects will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Eligibility and viability/sustainability of the business or organization (risk assessment such as financial, management, technological, etc. where applicable).
- Demonstrates economic benefits to Atlantic Canada (i.e. number of jobs created/maintained, impact on productivity/project-related revenue growth, project impact on enterprises' competitiveness, and contribution to business cluster or supply chain).
- Demonstrates innovation benefits (i.e., potential spillover benefits, creation of intellectual property, and impact on productivity of the new technology where applicable).
- Capacity and experience of the eligible applicant to implement project (i.e., achieve the stated objectives of the project/program, fulfill repayment obligations (if applicable), management and workforce capability, financial stability and capacity, market risk, etc.).
- Project contribution achieves the objectives and expected outcomes of the program and compliance with Government of Canada and ACOA priorities.
- Is incremental in nature (i.e. in addition to regular ongoing activities, must demonstrate need).
- Budget/value for money and adequate financing.
- Performance measurement.



APPLICANT GUIDE FOR THE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

PART 3 – APPLICATION PROCESS

To apply for financial assistance, please follow these steps:

- Download the Application Form from the [Application for financial assistance page](#).
- Refer to this guide while filling out the application form. After completing the form, save it and gather all necessary supporting documents as listed in the “Required Information and Documents” section of the form.
- You can submit the application online by revisiting the [Application for financial assistance page](#) and clicking on the “Ready to submit online” button. Alternatively, print the form and mail it, along with all supporting information and documents, to the closest [ACOA regional office](#).
- Retain a copy of the completed and signed application for your records.

PART 4 – COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FORM

All sections of the Application for Financial Assistance Form must be completed in full, where applicable.

Below is a summary and guidance for each section of the form.

SECTION A – APPLICANT INFORMATION

This section collects information about the applicant and their contact details, including:

- 1. Preferred official language:** Select the official language that is preferred for services, including correspondence.
- 2. Legal name of applicant:** Provide the legal name of the applicant on tax returns and legal documents. This name may be different from its operating name.
 - For sole proprietorships, it is the name you use on your individual tax returns.
 - For partnerships, it is the names of the partners or the name that the business was registered under with provincial authorities.
 - For corporations or non-commercial/non-profit organizations, it is the name that appears on the certificate of incorporation.



APPLICANT GUIDE FOR THE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

3. **Business or operating name of applicant:** If the business or operating name is different from the legal name of the applicant, provide all operating names, as applicable. The operating name is the name used for day-to-day activities and to advertise the business.
4. **Type of legal entity:** Select the appropriate option from those provided.
5. **Date of incorporation or registration:** Select the date stated on the applicant's Articles of Incorporation, letters patent, or other constituting document, as applicable.
6. **Applicant business number:** Indicate the exclusive nine-digit number assigned to the applicant by the Canada Revenue Agency. An organization can only have one business number, which is assigned to simplify relations between the organization and the federal government.
7. **Mailing address of applicant:** Provide the complete mailing address of the applicant's headquarters. The address should include the civic address, city, province, and postal code.
8. **Business telephone number:** Provide the business phone number of the applicant's headquarters.
9. **Facsimile number:** Provide the facsimile number of the applicant's headquarters.
10. **Email:** Identify a valid and active email address for the applicant.
11. **Website:** Provide the applicant's website.

SECTION B – AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE

An authorized representative of the applicant is a person who has the authority to make representations and sign legally binding documents for and on behalf of the applicant.

1. **First name of authorized representative:** Provide the first name of the person who is authorized to represent the applicant and who will be the main point of contact for the project. The authorized contact cannot be a consultant as ACOA will only communicate with the applicant.

If the contact person is not a signing officer of the applicant organization, further confirmation of that person's authority to represent the organization may be required.



APPLICANT GUIDE FOR THE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

2. **Last name of authorized representative:** Provide the last name of the person who is authorized to represent the applicant and who will be the main point of contact for the project.
3. **Position Title:** Provide the title of the person who is authorized to represent the applicant and who will be the main point of contact for the project.
4. **Business phone number:** Provide the business phone number of the authorized representative.
5. **Mobile phone number:** Provide the mobile phone number of the authorized representative.
6. **Facsimile number:** Provide the facsimile number of the authorized representative.
7. **Email:** Provide a valid and active email address for the authorized representative.
8. **Is this person an authorized signing officer of the applicant?** Specify whether the authorized representative is an authorized signing officer for the applicant.

SECTION C – OWNERSHIP

This section is reserved for businesses and partnerships. Non-commercial/non-profit entities are not required to complete this section and can go directly to Section D - Required Information and Documents.

1. **Provide information about the principal owners of the applicant:** Indicate in the table, the first and last names of all owners of the applicant (e.g., shareholders, partners), as well as the percentage of their share in the business, whether they are active in the company, and the position or role they occupy in the business, as applicable.
2. **Provide information for any parent company, subsidiaries, and any affiliate or related business entities:** Where applicable, provide the legal name of any parent entity of the applicant, subsidiary of the applicant, and/or entities that may be deemed affiliated or related to the applicant. Additionally, provide the city where their head office is located, the nature of their relationship with the applicant (e.g., parent, subsidiary, related), the contact person, and the telephone number.
 - A parent company is a company that owns the majority of the controlling shares or all the shares of another company.



APPLICANT GUIDE FOR THE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

- A subsidiary of the applicant is a company whose controlling or sole shareholder is the applicant.
 - Affiliates are usually where one company is a minority shareholder of another or when two companies are controlled by the same third party.
 - Related entities include entities that are each controlled by the same person or entity or group of persons or entities, or that are each controlled by a different person or entity, but the two persons or entities are related. There are other possible combinations of affiliated and related persons controlling corporations that can lead to the entities being affiliated or related.
- 3. Provide a description of the applicant and its mandate:** Provide basic background information on the applicant and its mandate (e.g., organization structure, history, mission, products and services).
 - 4. Name of bank/financial institution:** Provide the name, city and contact information of the bank/financial institution ACOA may contact to inquire about the applicant.
 - 5. Describe available credit:** Provide a description of the applicant's available credit.

SECTION D – REQUIRED INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTS

Please check “yes” to identify the documents that you have attached to the application form. These documents are required for ACOA to proceed with the evaluation of the application. Not providing the documents with the application form will delay the start of the evaluation process.

Commercial Applicants

Items 1, 2 and 3 are **mandatory**.

- 1. Incorporating documents and information on ownership:** Provide documents such as the articles of incorporation, which set out a corporation's purpose and regulations and proof of ownership, outlines names and percentage of ownership.
- 2. Financial statements:** Submit with your application the current and previous two years' financial statements.
- 3. Research and development (R&D) project plan, business plan and/or marketing plan:** Provide the applicant's R&D project plan, business plan and/or marketing plan, depending on the project being submitted. This is the key document that will



APPLICANT GUIDE FOR THE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

provide details on your project and describe the elements for which you are seeking ACOA assistance.

- An R&D project plan should include information such as project title, project summary, management experience, R&D team, summary of equipment and/or facilities, key collaborators, summary of work completed to date, activities to be carried out, project schedule, major project milestones, regulatory approvals, intellectual property, project costs and financing, and commercialization strategy.
 - A business plan outlines the applicant's vision, what it wants to achieve and how it plans to get there. The process of putting a business plan together helps set the course for the business, which includes preparing for obstacles, allocating resources and planning for opportunities. It's a living document that should be updated as the business evolves.
 - A marketing plan is a crucial component of the larger business plan. In the plan, the applicant describes its product and/or service in detail, emphasizing its unique or innovative features. It outlines the strategic plan for selling offerings within the target market.
- 4. Supplier quotes:** Attach the quotes for goods and/or services from suppliers, as applicable.
 - 5. Copies of relevant permits and licences:** Provide the permits, licences and regulations that apply to the applicant and project, as applicable.
 - 6. Other relevant documents (specify):** Include documents that could help with the evaluation of the application, if applicable.

Non-profit Applicants

Items 1 to 5 are **mandatory**.

- 1. Constituting/incorporating documents and list of directors/members of the board:** Provide constitution/incorporating documents and list of directors/members of the board such as bylaws, policies, board resolutions, etc.
- 2. Financial statements:** Submit with your application the current and previous two years' financial statements.



APPLICANT GUIDE FOR THE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

- 3. Description of mandate of the applicant, including the management and qualifications of key personnel:** Attach documents describing the applicant's purpose, mission and management structure. Provide details of qualifications of key personnel such as an explanation of how the expertise is relevant to the project objectives.
- 4. HST rebate information (e.g., rebate rate):** Provide the documentation from the Canada Revenue Agency that highlights the applicant's HST rebate rate. This is mandatory for the evaluation of the application.
- 5. Detailed project description, including milestones, costs, financing, key partnerships established and evidence of support from the community:** Provide the applicant's project information, which should include the project description, milestones, costs, financing, key partnerships established, and evidence of support from the community. This is the key document that will provide details on your project and describe the elements for which you are seeking ACOA assistance.
- 6. Supplier quotes:** Attach the quotes for goods and/or services from suppliers, as applicable.
- 7. Copies of relevant permits and licences:** Provide the permits, licences and regulations that apply to the applicant and project, as applicable.
- 8. Other relevant documents (specify):** Include documents that could help with the evaluation of the Application Form, if applicable.

SECTION E – PROJECT INFORMATION

This section collects details on the project.

- 1. Project name:** Provide the name of the project.
- 2. Project location:** Provide the complete physical address where the project will occur. The address should include the civic address, city, province and postal code.
- 3. Estimated start date of project (YYYY/MM/DD):** Identify the estimated start date of the project.
- 4. Estimated completion date of project (YYYY/MM/DD):** Identify the estimated end date of the project.
- 5. Estimated total project costs:** Provide the anticipated total costs to complete the project.



APPLICANT GUIDE FOR THE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

- 6. Amount requested from ACOA:** Indicate the requested amount of funding from ACOA.
- 7. Applicant fiscal year start (MM/DD):** Provide the applicant's fiscal year start date. This is the twelve-month period for reporting income earning activities. The fiscal period may or may not match the calendar year. The organization usually sets its fiscal period when it files its first income tax return.
- 8. Applicant fiscal year end (MM/DD):** Provide the applicant's fiscal year end date.
- 9. Has the applicant received assistance from ACOA previously?** Answer yes or no to identify whether the applicant has previously received funding from ACOA.
- 10. Has the applicant made any financial or legal commitments for the project?**
Respond yes or no to the question and explain if the answer is yes.
 - Financial commitments involve monetary obligations such as loans, leases, and bills. Legal commitments are enforceable obligations like contracts and regulatory compliance. Both types of commitments must be fulfilled to avoid legal consequences, financial penalties, or reputational damage.
- 11. Provide a description of the project and the key activities to be undertaken:**
Provide a brief description of the project and key activities that will be undertaken to ensure its success.
- 12. Describe the measurable economic benefits of the project:** Provide information on the measurable economic benefits of the project (e.g., increase revenue, improved productivity, job creation)
- 13. Total number of current jobs:** Identify the applicant's number of full-time equivalent jobs.
 - A full-time equivalent (FTE) can consist of one person at full-time employment, or more than one person at part-time employment, such that the total working hours of those part-time employees pooled together is equivalent to the hours of one person working full-time. Generally, full-time positions will involve between 35-40 hours in a regular workweek. Do not include FTEs who are employed by suppliers or contracted services.



APPLICANT GUIDE FOR THE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

14. Total number of jobs to be maintained at end date of project: Identify the number of jobs that will be maintained with the success of the project.

- A job maintained refers to a job that existed within the applicant's organization prior to the project, but that would not continue, or would likely be lost if the project is not funded. These jobs will continue to exist after the project is completed.

15. Total number of jobs to be created at end date of project: Identify the number of jobs that will be created with the success of the project.

- A job created refers to a job that did not exist within the applicant's organization prior to the project, but that was created as a direct result of the project activities and that will remain after the project is completed.

SECTION F – DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

This section is voluntary, and information collected is used for statistical purposes only. Aggregated and anonymized data may be used for reporting purposes and shared with other government departments and agencies in support of program administration.

You may choose to indicate whether the applicant is led or majority-led by persons who self-identify with one or more of the under-represented groups listed below.

You may also choose to indicate whether the project will benefit or encourage the inclusion of any under-represented groups listed below.

If you do not wish to self-declare the applicant's status or the status of the project in relation to the under-represented groups listed, leave either or both fields blank.

SECTION G – DISCLOSURES

This section requires the applicant to disclose information about the project that could have legal considerations.

Additional information must be provided for each question if the response is “no” to the first question or “yes” to any of the others.



APPLICANT GUIDE FOR THE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

SECTION H – CONSENT AND CERTIFICATION

Carefully read each statement in this section.

By signing the Consent and Certification section, the applicant agrees with and attests to all statements and authorizations contained in this section and agrees to be bound by them.

Making a false statement or providing misleading information may result in the Agency or its Minister exercising any remedy available at law and potentially other consequences.

By signing and submitting the application for financial assistance, the applicant acknowledges that the information contained therein is subject to the [Access to Information Act](#) and the [Privacy Act](#).



APPLICANT GUIDE FOR THE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

PART 5 – CONTACT ACOA’S REGIONAL OFFICES

ACOA - New Brunswick Office

81 Regent Street, Suite 500, P.O. Box 578, Fredericton, New Brunswick, E3B 5A6
Toll Free: 1-800-561-4030 ■ Telephone: 506-452-3184 ■ Facsimile: 506-452-3285

ACOA - Newfoundland and Labrador Office

The John Cabot Building, 10 Barter’s Hill, 11th Floor, P.O. Box 1060, Station C, St. John’s,
Newfoundland and Labrador, A1C 5M5
Toll Free: 1-800-668-1010 ■ Telephone: 709-772-2751 ■ Facsimile: 709-772-2712

ACOA - Nova Scotia Office

1801 Hollis Street, Suite 700, Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3J 3N4
Toll Free: 1-800-565-1228 ■ Telephone: 902-426-8361 ■ Facsimile: 902-426-2054

ACOA - Prince Edward Island Office

Royal Bank Building, 3rd Floor, 100 Sydney Street, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island,
C1A 1G3
Toll Free: 1-800-871-2596 ■ Telephone: 902-566-7492 ■ Facsimile: 902-566-7098

ACOA - Cape Breton Office

70 Crescent Street, Sydney, Nova Scotia, B1S 2Z7
Toll Free: 1-800-705-3926 ■ Telephone: 902-564-3600 ■ Facsimile: 902-564-3825